

TRICK-OR-TREATING TIPS

- Children under 12 years of age should not be alone at night without adult supervision. Parents should accompany children and stick to familiar neighborhoods.
- Older children should travel in groups in well-lit, familiar areas. They should have a planned route, an agreed-upon time to return home, and carry a cell phone for quick communication.
- Only go to well-lit houses and remain on the porch. Teach children never to go into a stranger's home or car for a treat.
- Walk on well-lit sidewalks and never cut across yards or use alleys.
- Choose light-colored costumes labeled "flame retardant," and make sure costumes, masks and shoes fit well to avoid trips and falls.
- Because masks can sometimes obstruct a child's vision, try using non-toxic face paint and makeup if possible. (Test them first to ensure they don't cause an allergic reaction.)
- Put a nametag with your address and two phone numbers on young children's costumes. Children should know their home phone number and how to call 911.
- Law enforcement authorities should be notified immediately of any suspicious or unlawful activity.

Candy Concerns

- Don't allow children to accept any homemade treats made by someone you don't know.
- If your child has food allergies, an adult should go up to the door and help select the candy. Even sealed candy can leave traces of nuts that can cause an allergic reaction.
- Children should bring treats home before eating so parents can inspect them. Discard any treats that are unsealed, have torn or open packages, are spoiled or otherwise suspicious.
- To prevent choking, do not allow young children to have hard candy or gum.

Healthy Treats

- Eating a good meal before going to parties or trick-or-treating will help discourage youngsters from filling up on Halloween treats. And parents can try rationing treats in the days and weeks following Halloween.
- Seek out healthy alternatives to dish out more nutritionally balanced snacks instead of sugar-filled treats. Some suggestions include:
 - Mini bags of fresh fruit and vegetables such as apples, grapes, raisins, carrots or celery
 - Mini bags of dried fruit or vegetable "chips"
 - Squeeze fruit, fruit chews, or fruit rolls
 - Mini bags of trail mix made with whole grain cereals
 - Peanut butter or apple sauce in single-serve containers
 - Individually packaged granola, cereal, soy, yogurt, and fig bars
 - Mini bags of pretzels, animal crackers, mini-rice cereal or granola bars, or whole grain cheddar cheese crackers
 - Small bottles of water
- If serving candy, choose bite-size candy bars that are lower in fat and sugar.
- Consider handing out non-food treats such as pencils, crayons, coloring books, or bottles of bubbles.
- Remind children to brush their teeth after snacking.

Protecting Pets

- All but the most social cats and dogs should be kept in a separate room safely away from the front door during peak trick-or-treating hours, as ringing doorbells and strangers at the door can make some pets very anxious. This will also keep your pets from escaping through the front door while you are handing out treats.
- If you do answer the door with your dog, it's a good idea to keep him or her on a leash to prevent a fearful dog from unexpectedly darting out the door or perhaps becoming aggressive toward children in costumes. Make sure your pet is properly identified (microchip, collar, ID tag) just in case it does manage to escape while you are distracted with young visitors.
- Candy can cause illnesses, vomiting, and diarrhea in pets, so make sure you keep sweets in a safe place out of your pet's reach. Also, don't share Halloween candy with the family pet, as many common treats can be quite dangerous. Chocolate, even in small amounts, can be toxic. So can xylitol, a common sweetener found in sugar-free candies and gum. Even raisins can be poisonous.
- If you plan to put a costume on your pet, make sure they will tolerate it. Watch for any signs that the animal is anxious or uncomfortable (growling, meowing, running, hiding). See that the costume fits properly and doesn't limit your pet's movement, sight, hearing or ability to breathe, bark or meow. Look for costumes specifically designed for pets and double check for small, dangling or easily chewed-off pieces that could present a choking hazard. Take time to get your pet accustomed to the costume before Halloween. If going outdoors, make sure the costume is easily seen by using things like reflective strips or glow sticks. And never leave your pet unsupervised while he or she is wearing a costume.
- Keep your pet away from lit candles, jack-o-lanterns, glow sticks, glow jewelry, and other decorations that are not pet friendly. Halloween decorations and accessories may have pieces that can be chewed off and cause a life-threatening obstruction in an animal's stomach.
- It's best to keep your animals inside, but if you do plan to take a pet trick-or-treating with you make sure he or she is well-behaved and on a leash. Many children running around can pose a risk of injury as well as stress out your pet. And watch that your pet doesn't scoop up and eat pieces of candy dropped on the ground.
- Keep your pet away from pranks, such as popular "spider dog," as these stunts are actually quite dangerous and could result in injury to the animal.

Home, Safe Home

- To keep homes safe for visiting trick-or-treaters, parents should remove from the porch and front yard anything a child could trip over, such as toys, bikes, garden hoses and lawn decorations.
- Check outdoor lights and replace burned-out bulbs.
- Sweep wet leaves from sidewalks and steps.
- Restrain pets so they don't inadvertently jump on or bite an unsuspecting trick-or-treater.

Pumpkin Prep

- Small children should never carve pumpkins. Youngsters can draw a face on the outside of the pumpkin with a marker then let an adult do the cutting.
- Be sure to carve pumpkins on a stable, flat surface.
- Consider using a flashlight or glow stick instead of a candle to light your pumpkin. If you do use a candle, votive candles are safest.
- Candlelit pumpkins should be placed on a sturdy table, away from curtains and other flammable objects. They should not be on a porch or any path where visitors may pass close by.
- Never leave lighted pumpkins unattended.

Street Smarts

Pedestrian injuries are the most common injuries to children on Halloween. On average, youngsters are twice as likely to be hit and killed by a car on Halloween as on any other day of the year, so trick-or-treaters and motorists alike should exercise extra caution come Tuesday. Motorists should...

- Remember that popular trick-or-treating hours are between 5:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., so be especially alert for kids during those hours.
- Drive slowly.
- Exit driveways and alleyways carefully.
- Watch for children in the street and on medians.

Children (and their escorts) should...

- Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk at the far edge of the roadway facing oncoming traffic.
- Carry a flashlight with fresh batteries or a glow stick to help them see and be seen by motorists.
- Decorate costumes and trick-or-treat bags with reflective tape or stickers.
- Always cross the street at the corner and use crosswalks, preferably in a group. Never cross between parked cars or out of driveways.
- Don't assume the right of way or that vehicles will stop for pedestrians. Drivers may have trouble seeing trick-or-treaters, and just because one car stops it doesn't mean others will.